

## Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 NEAE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 IO-13 /069 W

-----081309Z 094588 /44

P 081200Z FEB 77

FM AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4058

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, MPOL, LY, US

SUBJ: PROTEST TO LIBYA OVER NAVY AIRCRAFT INCIDENT

REF: STATE 020279

MFA ACTING DIRECTOR AMERICAS DEPT SUMMONED ME AFTERNOON  
FEB 7 TO RECEIVE LIBYAN RESPONSE TO OUR PROTEST OVER  
NAVY AIRCRAFT INCIDENT. COMMENT SEPTEL. EMBASSY TRANS-  
LATION LIBYAN RESPONSE FOLLOWS:

THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE LIBYAN ARAB  
REPUBLIC WISHES TO REFER TO THE NOTE OF THE STATE DEPT  
WHICH WAS DELIVERED TO THE LIBYAN EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON  
ON JANUARY 28, 1977, CONCERNING THE SURVEILLANCE AND  
RECONNAISSANCE BY THE LIBYAN AIR FORCE OF A MILITARY  
AIRCRAFT BELONGING TO THE USA ON JAN 27, 1977.

THE MFA WISHES TO INFORM THE EMBASSY OF THE US  
OF DETAILS OF THE INCIDENT WHICH ARE AS FOLLOWS:

THE LIBYAN ARAB REPUBLIC RADAR INSTALLATION  
DISCOVERED ON THE MORNING OF JAN 27, 1977, AN UN-  
IDENTIFIED AIR TARGET APPROACHING THE AREA OF ALPHA  
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A - PROHIBITED TO INTERNATIONAL AIRCRAFT AND INTER-  
NATIONALLY RECOGNIZED BY THE CIVIL AVIATION DIRECTORY,  
FLYING RAPIDLY BETWEEN 280 AND 310 MPH TOWARDS OQBA  
BIN NAFI AIR FORCE BASE. AT 12:05 P.M. THE TARGET  
APPROACHED THE BASE AT A DISTANCE OF 60 NAUTICAL  
MILES, AND ENTERED THE STIPULATED PROHIBITED AREA.  
THEREFORE, LAR AIR FORCE AIRCRAFT SCRAMBLED TO

RECONNOITER THE UNIDENTIFIED AIR TARGET, AND TO WARD OFF THE AIRCRAFT FROM THE PROHIBITED AREA WHICH IS DESIGNATED FOR TRAINING OF THE LIBYAN AIR FORCE. WHEN THE TARGET WAS RECOGNIZED AND IT BECAME CLEAR IT WAS A FOUR-ENGINE AMERICAN MILITARY AIRCRAFT TYPE "ORION" WHICH IS DESIGNED FOR ELECTRONIC SURVEILLANCE OPERATIONS, THE LIBYAN AIR FORCE PLANES RETURNED TO THEIR BASE AT 12:42 P.M. AFTER RECONNOITERING THE AMERICAN AIRCRAFT UNTIL IT LEFT THE PROHIBITED AREA.

FROM A REVIEW OF THESE FACTS, THE FOLLOWING IS CLEAR:

1. AN AMERICAN MILITARY AIRCRAFT ENTERED THE TRAINING AREA OF LIBYAN AIR FORCE WHICH IS INTERNATIONALLY RECOGNIZED AS PROHIBITED AND SUBSEQUENTLY PENETRATED LIBYAN AIR SPACE THREATENING THE SAFETY OF LIBYAN AIR FORCE AIRCRAFT.

2. LIBYAN AIR FORCE AIRCRAFT DID NOT INTERCEPT THE AMERICAN AIRCRAFT, BUT ONLY RECONNOITERED AND FOLLOWED IT BECAUSE THE UNIDENTIFIED AIRCRAFT WAS APPROACHING VITAL LIBYAN INSTALLATIONS.

3. THE LIBYAN RADAR INSTALLATION DISCOVERED THE AMERICAN MILITARY AIRCRAFT AND FOLLOWED ITS MOVEMENT FOR A LONG PERIOD AS IT APPROACHED OQBA BIN NAFI AIR FORCE BASE. ORDERS WERE NOT ISSUED TO RECONNOITER AND IDENTIFY THE AMERICAN AIRCRAFT UNTIL LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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AFTER IT BECAME CLEAR THAT IT WAS ACTUALLY HEADING TOWARDS THE BASE, AND AFTER IT HAD ENTERED THE PROHIBITED AREA.

4. THE LAR UNDERTOOK PROPER MILITARY PROCEDURES IN RECONNOITERING AND FOLLOWING THE AMERICAN AIRCRAFT, AND THE PROCEDURES WERE A FORM OF SELF-PROTECTION. AS AN EXAMPLE OF OUR GOOD INTENTIONS, THERE WAS ANOTHER AIRCRAFT OF THE SAME TYPE AND PURPOSE WHICH WAS NOT RECONNOITERED BECAUSE IT DID NOT APPROACH THE PROHIBITED AREA. THEREFORE, IT IS CLEAR THAT WE ONLY FOLLOWED THE AIRCRAFT WHICH WAS THREATENING VITAL AREAS.

THEREFORE, THE LARG EXPRESSES ITS STRONG DISPLEASURE WITH THE UNDIPLOMATIC STATEMENTS OF THE US DEPARTMENT OF STATE DIPLOMATIC NOTE AND RETIREATES WHAT THE SELF-PROTECTION PROCEDURES UNDERTAKEN TO GUARANTEE ITS SAFETY, AND SOVEREIGNTY, AND THE SAFETY OF ITS VITAL INSTALLATIONS ARE IN

COMPLETE CONFORMITY WITH THE PRINCIPLE OF SELF-  
DEFENSE WHICH IS PROVIDED FOR IN INTERNATIONAL LAW,  
AND INTERNATIONAL PRACTICE AND CUSTOMS.

BY PRACTICING THIS SELF-EVIDENT RIGHT THE  
LARG TAKES NO RESPONSIBILITY FOR WHAT MIGHT HAPPEN  
AS A RESULT OF MISTAKES OF OTHERS BUT THE LARG WILL  
HOLD THE US FULLY RESPONSIBLE IN THE EVENT OF A  
REPETITION OF ANY ACTION SIMILAR TO THAT WHICH  
WAS UNDERTAKEN BY THE AFOREMENTIONED AMERICAN AIRCRAFT.  
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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** SURVEILLANCE, AERIAL RECONNAISSANCE, DIPLOMATIC PROTESTS, OBSERVATION AIRCRAFT  
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**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
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**Disposition Date:** 22 May 2009  
**Disposition Event:**  
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**Document Number:** 1977TRIPOL00182  
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**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** N/A  
**Errors:** N/A  
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**Office:** ACTION NEA  
**Original Classification:** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Page Count:** 3  
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**Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Reference:** 77 STATE 20279  
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**SAS ID:** 3374902  
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**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** PROTEST TO LIBYA OVER NAVY AIRCRAFT INCIDENT  
**TAGS:** PFOR, MPOL, LY, US  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
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**Review Markings:**  
Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
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22 May 2009  
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